2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
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262 235 are kept by one or two men in most villages and housed in elaborate pigeon houses built with considerable trouble and protected with magic rites. But they are hardly ever eaten because 'People want to keep many pigeons, so they are afraid to waste the seed' (i.e. to reduce the stock). They like to see the birds flying about the village. They are things kept as a sign of rank. They just flutter and flutter about. They show the rank of the owner of the pigeon house.'[1] A common saying is 'The domestic animals of rich people cause admiration like pigeons'[2] i.e. they wander here and there and give the effect of countless numbers.

235 554

231 Goats and sheep also add to the reputation of their owner. The reluctance of the Bemba to kill and use them for ordinary purposes seems to be based on two different attitudes. On the one hand [232] these people are as ignorant of methods of rearing stock as they are of poultry breeding. They lack completely any pastoral tradition, and the way in which goats, for instance, are treated, makes it little short of miraculous that any survive. The Bemba children do not herd them or look after them, and it is not uncommon for the owner to forget to let his goats out of their pen to feed. A man buys a goat or sheep as a sort of gesture, probably because he wants to acquire possessions, and he puts it in a shed, but he never seems to have any idea of building up a herd or relying economically on the sale of meat. The milk is never used. Added to this the killing of so large an animal as a goat or a sheep has a particular significance for the native, and this makes him unwilling ● [782] to slaughter except for some special ceremonial reason. A goat is something approaching a human being, and is used nowadays as a substitute for human sacrifices. It can also serve as a compensation for some serious bodily injury, in which case it will probably change hands but not be killed. It is interesting that the Bemba, who have substituted money payments for many of their old religious dues, feel that a financial compensation would be unsuitable in such a case. 'It is right to give a goat because it is a man who has been hurt.' There is even some indication that the Bemba believe that to kill a domestic animal might bring dangerous consequences, just as the murder of a man would. In this tribe the belief that the spirit of a murdered man returns as a haunting

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231 776

[1] *Fitekwa fya bukankala. Fyakupukapuka: filelanga bukankala bwa kwa cibinda ca nkunda.*

[2] *Fitekwa fya bakankala fyakukumukapo fye nge nkunde.*

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their village life, and, as in most other Bantu societies, the common, and sometimes the essential way of fulfilling social obligations. Beer is the present of honour between kinsmen. It is carried to chiefs as tribute, used to reward labour, or given as an offering to spirits. Nowadays, it may be one of the few ways by which a woman, left deserted by her husband, can make money for clothes.[1] Men cultivate extra ground in order to have enough millet for brewing. Abundance of beer is the glory of a commoner's hospitality, or a chief's court. Without it tribal councils cannot be held, and marriage or initiation ceremonies do not take place. For all these reasons it is impossible to describe the physical effects of native beer-drinking without knowing the part it plays in the Bemba's whole social life. *Ubwalua* is served in big calabashes holding about 2 or 3 gallons, or in disused petrol tins. It consists of a thick brown sludge to which hot water is added constantly throughout the evening so that the brew gets gradually weaker and weaker.[2] It is drunk through a hollow reed two or three gulps at a time. It is a cloudy fluid, often full of gritty particles, with a clear sharp taste not unlike the bitter flavour of English beer. Most natives become positively lyrical as to its qualities. They say it makes them rejoice (*ukusansamuka*) and that it warms their hearts (*ukukafyo mutima*)—the ordinary phrase used for getting excited and also angry. Old councillors at the chief's court who have become used to a regular supply of beer, complain bitterly if they are deprived of it. They say that it is bad for them to eat 'cold food', i.e. ordinary meals, and that they need something to 'burn their stomachs just there' (with a hand laid on the spot), and in fact beer must be much easier to digest in old age than most other Bemba foods.

Beer is recognized as making a man more talkative, liable to quarrel, or indulge in illicit love-making, and men whose hearts get hot quickly, to repeat the native phrase, are avoided at beer-drinks, if possible, because they may involve their friends in legal liabilities. I have even heard of cases where Bemba refused to marry into families with a reputation for becoming excitable when drunk. But drunkenness itself is not despised. In fact the drunkard

[1] The sale of beer is illegal in this district, but it is practically impossible to prevent the trading of small quantities.

[2] In samples taken at the beginning and at the end of an evening respectively, Dr. Widdowson found that the alcohol content varied from 4·44 per cent. to 2·10 per cent. (I am indebted to Mr. Douglas Miller of the Education Department for dispatching these samples.)

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A number of the husband's relatives also come on long visits. His male kinsmen, if unmarried or widowed, must be regularly fed by the housewife, who prepares them separate dishes if possible. If married and of junior status their wives will help with the cooking, since there is no strong avoidance between a woman and her husband's brother's wife, who may, in fact, become her co-wife if the former dies. But the female relatives of the husband, his mother and sisters, stand in a rather different category, as has been described, and a widowed or deserted wife who has 'gone to her brother' will work alone with her children and be given food of her own to cook.

In all these different forms of hospitality it will be seen how the giving and receiving of food has acquired symbolic value, and that the difference between cooked and uncooked food, special dishes, or the manner of serving them may indicate distinctions in rank, kinship, or age, and that much of the cooking done by the Bemba housewife is an expression of these various degrees of status.

Division of Meat.

Since meat is a perishable food that must be divided at once, it is natural that its distribution follows different rules. Every bit of the animal is known by name and graded according to its social value, but I did not find that the portions of game to be allotted to different kinsmen were so clearly defined as seems to be so in the case of cattle among a number of the pastoral Bantu. With a big animal the chief should be given tribute of a leg, while the headman of the village has some honoured portion according to convenience. The father-in-law of the hunter, his father, or *nalume*, have also their gift of respect, but the rest of the joints appear to be distributed according to the hunters' inclinations, and I have seen all sorts of portions—hind-leg, foreleg, or back given to these different relatives.

The cattle killed for sacrifice at the chief's court are, however, divided according to very definite rules—often according to the symbolic associations of each part, as for instance the gift of the heart to Citimululu at the slaying of an ox at the founding of his new village. I have taken notes at six such divisions of a beast, but the distribution cannot be understood without a knowledge of the functions of the different dignitaries of the court.

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crosses the Kalungu river near the capital at dead of night and has ritual intercourse with a woman given him for the purpose on the spot selected for the building of the *kumitembo*. Thus he 'warms the bush' (*ukukafye mpanga*) and leaves immediately afterwards secretly for his own village. On the place where his sleeping mat lay, one of the *bakabilo*, Cishika, the hereditary lighter of the chief's fire, must immediately make new fire by friction. This is the chief's sacred fire. The same patch of grass serves as site for the *kumitembo* house built a day or so after by all the *bakabilo* in concert after prayers by the Citimukulu and the burial of flour, salt, meat, and fish in the foundations. Once built the sacred hearth must be installed (*ukuteka ishiko*) and this is done as the climax of the long ceremonial founding of the village,[1] by killing a female sheep, and cooking it in the hut on the sacred fire with salt made from river grasses. This use of the traditional salt of the tribe is said to ensure that the land may be savoured (*calo calowe*). Two big baskets are then cooked on the same hearth and carried to the chief, who tastes the porridge and meat and then hands it to all his *bakabilo* to eat. This is the way in which the 'spirits are put into the hut' (*ukubika mipashi mu panda*), so that the life of the new village may begin.

After this the chief's fire burns perpetually in the *kumitembo* as also in two other sacred houses in the village and it remains under the special charge of the *umukulo*.[2] No person of sexual vigour may enter for fear of polluting the fire, and the chief's messages are carried there by small boys. Within the hut were piled in the old days the carrying poles on which tribute of beer and meat had been slung—signs of the chief's greatness—and the elephant tusks brought him. This is no longer done, but the beer required for big sacrifices to the land spirits is brewed in the *kumitembo*, and the chief and his head wife sleep here during this period, keeping sex taboos all the while. This is described as 'waiting for the yeast of the land' (*ukulindilo mulunga wa calo*). Animals killed for sacrifices are also killed here, and the new crops cooked before being offered for the first-fruits are

[1] The ceremony of founding the last new village for the Citimukulu took from May to September 1933. I witnessed the first part of the ceremony but not the installation of the sacred hearth.

[2] The *umukulo* should only have ritual intercourse with the chief on ceremonial occasions and therefore as a person sexually pure remains a fit guardian of the tribal fire.

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431 commensurable value to the incommensurable gratitude, friendship,
436 or respect which he wants to express. He prefers to exchange his coins for some other object, possibly of far less practical value to the recipient. The African chief, on the contrary, is more flattered on receiving a coin, however small, than anything else, because, as he says: 'money is respect (*amacinshi*)'. Small coins are constantly used as presents of honour to relatives, and it is quite common for a servant who wants to make an elegant gift to his white master to do so by presenting him with a threepenny or a sixpenny bit. Sums of money are used as compensation in cases of injury or insult.

436 In particular ceremonies money again performs special func-
[535 tions. At a marriage or an initiation rite coins are used instead
924] of the old bark-cloth, and also as a payment for ritual services or as a means of removing taboos. Sixpence or a shilling may be
[704] offered to the woman who lights a girl's fire on the morning after her marriage, to those who whitewash the hut after a funeral ceremony, or to remove a taboo on eating. At the ceremonial
[643 founding of the chief's new village there is now a fixed tariff ranging
•782] from 1*l.* to 10*s.* for the hereditary priests who are in charge of the rites, such as the lighter of the sacred fire, the opener of the sacred relic huts, or those who purify the chief, wake him ceremonially in the morning, or beat his hereditary drum. In all these cases the coins are used as valuables much as the ivory tusks, cloth, or bracelets of old days were employed, and their rarity makes them the most suitable objects available at the present day.

436 With this special attitude to money, it is not surprising that the
556 Bemba still consider it waste to use coins for the purchase of food. money is too rare and too hardly come by to be thrown away on a commodity that can be got in some other way. Only a few years before my visit an old woman was discovered dying of starvation in a disused hut on the motor road with a 2*s.* piece tied in a fold of her cloth. It had apparently never occurred to her to use the money to buy supplies on her journey to the mines to look for her son. Younger people have naturally changed in this respect, but it is still true to say that money is never 'wasted' (*ukuposa*) on food unless it is absolutely necessary, as it is near the white towns. Even then the transition to a sale from a gift from a kinsman or a subject is a very gradual one. People buying from relatives pay less than the normal rate, and usually add some service to the transaction Chiefs buying from subjects, as we shall see, pay nominal

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monial observance, or in carrying out his obligations to his chief, 774
roused the anger of the *imipashi* on whose beneficence he depends. 777
In the same way the Paramount chief who is remiss in his duty, whether ritual or otherwise, risks the displeasure of the tutelary spirits of the whole land, and may plunge the entire tribe into a state of imminent ill luck. The results of such a withdrawal of supernatural blessings cannot be clearly prophesied, but they are expected to include deaths in the royal clan, general epidemics, or locust swarms, failure of the women to bear children, the sudden appearance of man-eating lions, drought, and blighted harvests, as well as the failure of the whole *mpanga* to yield its food-supplies. At such times, the natives say, men go out to hunt, but the game stays hidden in the bush; they set fish-traps and catch nothing; they look for mushrooms and find none.

For this reason a chief, when he prays to the spirits, asks for 782
every type of blessing on the land and not for the success of cultivated crops alone. For instance, Mulewa Cimfwembe, one of the hereditary councillors of Citimukulu, described to me an occasion in the past when the Paramount had prayed for rain, saying, 'You, the owner of my land, look now! We have not yet seen any porridge, fish, meat, and all sorts of food,'[1] i.e. the withholding of rain was a symptom of a displeasure that might be expected to result also in a shortage of fish and game as well as the millet harvest. Rain fell as the result of this prayer and then, the narrator continued, 'We saw food in great plenty, and meat, and fish, every sort of food! Every one walked in peace. The lions did not spring on the people, no! And they (i.e. the people) killed many elephants.'[2]

The *imipashi*, that is to say when they had relented sufficiently to send rain, also withheld the ferocity of the lions, and stilled the quarrels of human beings. Their blessings are conceived as being given on a sort of 'all or none' principle in fact. Such beliefs hardly seem to have been shaken by white contact. Most Bemba explained the recent locust scourge as a sign of the spirits' displeasure, and even sophisticated natives pointed out that the coming of the pest had coincided with an unusual shortage of game and the fall in the price of copper that was producing unemployment at the mines.

[1] *Mwe mwine mpanga yandi, moneni! Tatumona bwali, sabi, nama, fyakulya fyonse . . . &c.*

[2] *Twamone fyakulya fingi sana, ne nama, ne sabi, fyakulya fyonse! Bonse balcendo mutende. Nkalamo Tashikata bantu, yo! Ne mofu shingi balēpaya.*

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PART VI

ORGANIZING THE WORK

CHAPTER XVII

RELIGION AND MAGIC IN ECONOMIC LIFE

The Nature of Economic Ritual.

THE fundamental Bemba beliefs in the powers of their ancestral spirits have already been referred to constantly, whether in relation to their political organization, their system of land tenure, or their general attitude towards the production and collection of food. But the ritual of their ancestor worship remains to be outlined, and in particular the part it plays in their whole economic life. The Bemba pray, or offer sacrifices, at all the chief events of the agricultural year such as tree-cutting, sowing, and harvest. Formerly this ceremonial seems to have been unusually rich and complex, especially that performed at the Paramount Chief's court. Nowadays the rites are carried out with diminishing ceremony, by fewer people, and often with great secrecy, owing to severe discouragement from some of the missionaries in the area. But the beliefs associated with these rites still seemed to me to dominate the people's thoughts and to affect their agricultural efforts, while the ceremonies themselves, even when temporarily abandoned, were often resumed at times of ill luck or catastrophe. They had still to be reckoned as one of the most important sanctions of the chief's authority, and were hence unfailingly performed at the latter's court.

For all these reasons it is important for our special purpose to estimate the function of these magico-religious practices in Bemba economic life and, consequently, the effect which their lapse is likely to have on the production of food in the territory as a whole. In a tribe living at this particular level of development it is chiefly human energy and purpose which makes the difference between failure and success, and ritual has often been described as one of the chief means by which the courage and industry of a primitive people is kept at its height. This pragmatic aspect of magic and religion was first emphasized by Malinowski in his analysis of

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
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769 In this case the chief is praying for the welfare of the territory as
796 a whole, and, for instance, at a tree-cutting ceremony, he is described as cutting 'the trees of the land' (*imiti ya calo*), as distinct from just cutting his own trees. This form of the rite was apparently not performed annually, even in the past. It involved the gathering of thirty or forty priests and councillors, with their respective retinues, and could only be undertaken when the chief felt certain of the loyalty of these hereditary officials and had the means of feeding such a large gathering during several weeks.[1] For instance, the present Citimukulu incurred for some years the hostility of his *bakabilo*, principally the Cimba, and hence was unable to carry out the full rite for some time, a fact which certainly diminished his authority. It seems clear also that the great chiefs of the past were able to vary the form of the ritual on such tribal occasions by adding particular ceremonies as special demonstrations of their power. The special tree-cutting and sowing rites described on pp. 366–74 are cases in point. Old men now describe such rites as having been introduced by such and such a chief, and count the number of times they have been performed.

769 (*c*) A still more elaborate form of prayer to the spirits is the
796 series of sacrifices known as the *ulupepo lukalamba*—'big sacrifice'
● 782 at which offerings of cattle, chickens, beer, hoes, or cloth are made at all the big shrines in the land.[2] This series of rites usually coincides with the first-fruit ceremonies, and in fact it would be difficult to feed a big gathering of officials except at harvest time. The special *ukusumata* (or 'tasting') rite for the Kaffir corn is first performed (cf. p. 378) and then the Citikafula, the *mukabilo* in charge of such sacrifices, should be sent with a basket of Kaffir-corn flour blessed at the relic shrines, and two oxen to the neighbouring shrines of Mulenga Porkili and Bwalya Cabala, the first royal ancestress. Here the beasts must be sacrificed and the flour scattered on the ground. This initiates the succession of sacrifices which are to follow. All the *bashimapepo* are called to the capital and are given cloth or chickens to offer at their local spirit centres, and messengers go to and fro between the different capitals to inform the territorial chiefs of the proceedings. They in their turn

[6?2]

[1] The poverty of the modern chief and his inability to get tribute labour naturally makes it more and more difficult for him to organize tribal ceremonies of this kind.

[2] According to the degree of respect to which the dead chief is due.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

start to sacrifice at the sacred spots in their own districts. Only when the chain of sacrifices is complete the Bemba say '*Ulupepo lwabuka mu calo*' ('The sacrifice has risen up in the land'). The organization of such ceremonies on the large scale of former days can have been no mean feat in a territory as large and as sparsely populated as that of the Bemba. Formerly even Nkula of Icinga, some 100 miles from the Paramount's village, 'prayed with Citimukulu', but a subsequent estrangement between the two branches of the royal house has resulted in independent action at the present day, although the Nkula was still obliged in 1931 to send to ask for Citimukulu's help in the arrangement of a sacrifice at the royal burial grove when Icinga was short of rain. Shortage of supplies, and in particular of cattle, for sacrifices make it impossible for the rites to take place on such a wide scale as formerly, and in 1931 Chief Mwamba offered a beast at the Ngulu cave at Cilubula without simultaneous action by Citimukulu.

Such tribal ceremonies have only been organized from time to time by the Bemba chiefs. The last Citimukulu, Ponde, reigned only a few years and 'did not sacrifice at all' (*tapepa*), while Makumba, the previous Paramount, ordered the *ulupepo lukalamba* twice, Sampa, his predecessor, three times, &c., and Citapankwa 'many times'. It seems to have been undertaken either when some unusual disaster, such as a drought or a small-pox epidemic, was affecting the whole tribe, or alternatively, when the Citimukulu was in a particularly powerful position and wanted to demonstrate his strength. This he did by showing his power to provide beer, food, and sacrifices for his whole territory, and commanding the loyalty of all his councillors assembled for the meeting. He was the *mwine lupepo*, the owner, or host of the ceremony, just as a man distributing beer to his friends is the *mwine wa bwalwa* ('the owner of the beer'). The rite was also made the occasion of tribal council meetings (*ukuteke cilyo*), and thus assumed great administrative importance as distinct from its political and economic function. To hold such a ceremony was a sign that the chief felt certain of his authority. No Citimukulu would undertake the *ulupepo lukalamba*, I was told, until he had been firmly settled on the throne for some years and had built two or three villages. Successful chieftainship, like successful headmanship, is a position that must be built up gradually through the forging of personal ties, and of a Citimukulu who had not attempted the big sacrifice I was told

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769 796 782 'He had not waited (lingered, dwelt) here long enough' (*Tabakokwele kuno pakalamba*). The present Paramount's attempt, only partially successful, to organize such a sacrifice in 1934 illustrated well the sort of motives that seem to have operated. He had reigned about ten years and was about to build what he described as his last village.[1] He had achieved an uneasy reconciliation with his *bakabilo* after their previous discontent and was thus enabled to count on their support for the ceremony; and the plague of locusts that had been decimating the land for two or three years and the simultaneous fall in the price of copper which restricted employment for his people made him decide that the 'land was hard' (*icalo nacikama*) and that the tribal spirits were refusing their blessings as a result of some years' neglect. It was one of the occasions of return to ritual previously abandoned which I have mentioned above.

These alternative ceremonies at the big chiefs' courts show the extent to which their economic function is linked with, and even dominated by, the political. The rites are associated with agricultural activities and sometimes follow a disaster threatening the land's prosperity, but they have greater significance as demonstrations of the chief's authority and supernatural qualities, on which beliefs the successful cultivation of the land ultimately depends.

The Morphology of the Rites.

769 771 796 The form of all these annual economic rites is strikingly similar. The same elements appear in each successive ceremony. They evidently reflect the people's basic beliefs as to the supernatural forces that control them and a number of their fundamental concepts, such as that of the magic power of sex, of fire, or of water. The double nature of the rites, both as enlisting the help of the ancestral spirits in particular economic enterprise and also in stressing the political authority associated with the ownership and cultivation of the land, is also clear. All the rites include:

(*a*) *The invocation of the imipashi.* The officiating priest makes request for some particular aid such as protection from the danger

[1] He told me 'Because I am adult now (fully grown) we shall settle down in this village now. They (the *bakabilo*) shall teach me all the old ceremonies' (*Pantu ninkula. Tukekala ku mushi nomba. Bakamfunda fyonse fya kale*)—a sentence which expresses the Bemba conception that full supernatural powers are only acquired by the chief when he has reached age and success.

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
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881 X 123

girls in question, and I had little time to get subsequent comment from other sections of the community such as the men of the village as distinct from the women, or from one or two of the Christians living in the neighbourhood. A striking gap in my material is the absence of any comments made by the girls themselves. This is, I think, significant. These girls, who are obliged to remain silent, often covered with blankets, seem to lose all personality for the observer as the rites follow one after the other. They are both the centres of the ceremony, and yet the least interesting of the actors in it. However, I consider my failure to arrange for longer conversations and more intimate contacts with the two girls to have been a serious omission. It leaves an element of uncertainty in my interpretation of the educational function of the rites.

881 X 128

In the following account, I try to give a straightforward description of what I actually saw and heard with comments made by informants during the ceremony or in answer to questions afterwards. I was able to check up much of the data during a visit to other areas in 1933–4, and with specialist students of Cibemba, Paul Mushindo, A. Chileshye, I. A. Nkonde and Kasonde.

Comments made to me during the course of the rites are given in brackets. Unless otherwise stated, the comments were made by any woman present. Interpretations made subsequently, either by one of the *nacimbusas* or by one of these Bemba experts are given in footnotes.[1] N.G. stands for Nangoshye, P.B.M. for Paul Mushindo and A.C. for A. Chileshye.

FIRST DAY

The blessing of the girls (*ukupala amate*)

881 X 752

The first rite of the ceremony took place on May 31st. I was told that the headman of the village called the blessing of his ancestral spirits in the early morning. This he did by spitting into the air and calling on the names of his ancestors. I did not see this rite but it is the common Bemba practice in ceremonies of the kind.

The entry into the hut (*ukwingishya abanacisungu*)

881 X

At about four in the afternoon, the village drums began to go with the characteristic chisungu rhythm. I was called to the hut

[1] A free translation of songs is given. The full interpretation follows in Appendix B. The song numbers refer to this appendix.

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

were serious and interested, but I could not interpret it fully. I was 881x
told it was to teach the girl not to pretend to be thirsty when she had already drunk. The spraying of saliva in the air is the usual Bemba way of asking the blessing of the ancestors.)[1] [782]

A small hollow was then cleared in the wet mud and Nangoshye balanced herself on both elbows over it, swinging herself to and fro above the muddy pool.

The women sang:

> '*Following the ways of God*
> *We imitate our mothers.*' (No. 27)

(The details of this ceremony are obscure to me. Nangoshye explained that she swung over the hole in the mud to 'imitate our mothers who bore us' and implied she was representing the act of birth. She also said she was teaching the girls how they were to [841]
bathe in the river during menstruation, that is to say, apart from others so as not to contaminate the stream. P.B.M. referred to the song sung at the same time as meaning 'Sometimes we do not follow Lesa (God) but follow our mothers.' This seemed to be an explanation of a Christian type, but the idea of the passing down of tradition and the passing down of the child from the womb seemed to be implicit. A.C. writes: 'It is our duty to follow God, to pass on knowledge as we had it passed on to us. We make you a mother as your mothers were to you.')

The *banacisungu* were then pulled forward. Their clothes were kilted round the waist and they were pushed into the muddy water and thoroughly splashed all over. Then they were washed, cleansed and covered over body and face with whitewash. The [302]
white clay was brushed on with meticulous care with a grass brush. A lump of black mud was put cross-shaped on the head of each girl and decorated with the usual pumpkin seeds and red dye. Their heads were then covered with a cloth and, still with down-cast eyes and apparent embarrassment, they led the procession back to the village. The women sang:

> '*We tracked a lion in our garden and reported it,*
> *The hunter has not forgotten.*' (No. 28)[2]

[1] *Wilaba cilaka nga amina menshi! awikasakaminawa!*

[2] *Subsequent Bemba interpretation.* (A.C.): The ceremony is like the spots of the leopard which never change or are forgotten.

769 778 Spirits are also worshipped, as has been mentioned, at the chiefs' relic huts, at the sites of dead chiefs' villages, which are revered as spirit centres, and at remarkable natural objects such as caves and waterfalls (*ngula*) which are also thought to be spirit centres. Major chiefs are buried in a sacred grove guarded with great care by a priest, the *shimulule*. This is the home of the most powerful tribal spirits and an animal used to be sacrificed here on the rare occasions when drought was threatened. The spirits of the chiefs also manifest themselves in the presence of possessed men and women who prophesy and heal. Ancestral spirits are approached by the man or woman who has succeeded to their name and guardian spirit, that is to say, the head of a small local lineage, a headman or a chief.

769 782 783 Ancestral spirits are addressed after a ritual seance between the officiant and his wife, followed by ceremonial purification. The spirits are addressed by name and some form of sacrifice, e.g. beer, cloth, flour and chickens, is offered to them.

(c) MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT

789 Bemba and Bisa believe in the potency of *bwanga* which may be translated as "magic". Bemba magical rites depend for the most part on medicine (*muti*), usually part of a plant or tree, sometimes with the addition of energizing charms giving potency to the medicine. Words are sometimes used but, as with the Azande, there is less insistence on and less importance attached to the spell than to the rite and the medicines. It is the magician (*Ng'anga*) who procures and uses the medicine and from whom it may be purchased. To ensure effectiveness the *Ng'anga* must invoke *Leza*, without whose consent the medicines are thought to be ineffectual.

Magic is used for general protective purposes - to ensure fertility, good health and luck, to give staying power to food. In the economic sphere magic seems to be used less among the Bemba than the Bisa. Richards suggests that the greater development of the ancestral cult among the former is the reason for this.(1)

754 787 Magic is also used in divination. The commonest form of divination is the rubbing of an axe over a skin until it sticks in answer to a question, and boiling of medicine in a pot until the mixture bubbles over one side or the other side. Another characteristic form of Bemba divination is the hunting ritual used to ascertain the cause of a person's death, according to whether a male or female animal is first driven into the hunting nets. This rite can be used as a preliminary test for witchcraft. In the old days the *lilemfo*, or war fetish, originally obtained from the Lunda chiefs near Lake Mweru was employed. This was a horn placed on a spike which was thought only to work if smeared with the blood of a human victim. *Kwafi*, the poison used as a test for witchcraft from the Southern Sudan to Southern Rhodesia, was used by the senior chiefs in this area.

754 Evil magic, or sorcery, was distinguished as *buloshi*, a term which covers witchcraft, in the sense of inborn power, as well as the manipulation

(1) Richards, A, 1939, pp.356, 187.

754 of magical forces in sorcery. The *maioshi* is a man who kills without rhyme or reason, an enemy of society who kills from a distance, who is associated with black birds and who steals parts of the body from newly dug graves.(1) Enemies may also be killed by the use of medicine, either apparently by an evilly disposed person or by the *Ng'ongo* who may be employed to defend someone who believes he is attacked.(2)

831 *Sex and Fire.* Characteristic of this group of peoples is the series of be-
372 liefs associated with the magic potency of sex when used according to certain rules, and, connected with this, the danger of the pollution of domestic fires or the fires of chiefs by contact with adulterers or evil livers. Such beliefs are the basis of the multiplication of small protective rites associated with chieftainship, the bringing-up of children, and the girls' initiation ceremony.(3)

SOME IMPORTANT RITUALS

788 The most important ceremonies carried out amongst the Bemba are as follows:-
241

(1) *Economic Rites.* At the time of the firing of the bush the chief or headman places an axe at the head of his bed at night or, in the case of a chief, in the relic shrine. Sowing ceremonies at the Paramount's capital used to be elaborate, but are now reduced to the placing of seeds in the relic shrines; similar ceremonies are done by headmen. The first-fruits rites, when the tasting of the new crops takes place, were also formerly elaborate among the Bemba. They are still carried out in an abbreviated form at the capital, and headmen place in their small spirit huts portions of each new crop.

766 (2) *Ceremonial in Chieftainship.* The most elaborate forms of ceremonial
782 amongst the Bemba are those that surround the burial of a dead chief, the installation of his successor and the moving of his village. In the old days the death of a Paramount Chief was concealed for a few days while his followers fled from the capital and the sacred relics were moved to a place of safety. The ritual buriers then took charge and dried the body and covered it with a sauce made of beans, carefully preserving the toe and finger nails. After a year the corpse was carried round the Paramount's territory and human victims were sacrificed on each spot where the body rested at night. The body was then carried across the Chambasi river where it was received by the *shimwalule* who carried it into the sacred grove. The favourite wives of the chief and some of his slaves were put into the grave to hold the body of the *Citimukulu* and were stifled as the earth was filled in. Although cattle are not kept in the area, the body was wrapped in the skin of an ox.

643 The installation of a chief is a similarly complex process, in which all the *bakabilo* and *bafingo* play their part. Important elements were the transfer of the sacred relics to the new capital, the lighting of the chief's new fire, and the installation of his head wife. Details of this form of ceremonial are not available from the associated tribes, but it is certain that

(1) For some comments on the relation between witchcraft and psychopathology, see Davidson, 1949.
(2) Richards, 2, 1935.
(3) Richards, 7, 1940.

pants from the contemplation of their loss he makes jokes at the expense of the dead man and behaves in a fashion which in other circumstances would be considered outrageous and would not be tolerated. 764

Kazembes considered themselves as potentially immortal; thus the death of a Kazembe was attributed to neglect of magical precautions against witchcraft.(1) According to Pinto, slaves and wives of a dead Kazembe were sacrificed and a ten-day period of authorized licence followed during which robberies were allowed.(2) 754 643 782

It was believed that the living and the dead could communicate. Life after death resembled that led while alive.(3) 775

RELIGIOUS AND MAGICAL BELIEFS AND RITUAL

The concept of the high-god Lesa is common to the Bemba-speaking peoples. *Lesa*, the creator, is regarded rather as a nature force than a personal deity and is not the object of an organised cult. He manifests himself in thunder, lightning, and the rainbow and can kill by lightning or epidemics, but generally interferes little. 776

The *ngulu*, nature spirits residing in animals, trees, stones, hills, caves, ponds, waterfalls, can bring good weather and crops and are prayed to in an emergency. This cult is of non-Lunda origin and has probably come from the Chishinga, Lungu and Bemba country. Most of the dwelling-places of these spirits are found on the escarpment hills and on the plateau. The *afumu ya mipashi* (chiefs of spirits), which can enter and possess people making them dance, are local deities whose beneficient activity is confined to the village or district. [177]

When the general well-being of the community was concerned the spirits of dead Kazembes, *mazemas*, were consulted and presented with offerings of cassava, beer and goats. Kazembes were buried at a place north-east of the old capital with which it was connected by a broad pathway(4) still discernible. Each had a shrine which was tended by a guardian-priest, *mfine mazemo*,(5) whose office was hereditary. These keepers of the royal graves sought the advice of the oracle when war was contemplated and invoked the assistance of the spirits.(6) The River Lualaba, in which Kazembe the founder of the dynasty rests, was held in veneration. Processions went there annually at harvesting time. It is said that Keleka was the first Kazembe who failed to lead the procession in person, and the famine and smallpox epidemic which later occurred were attributed to his negligence.(7) The Kazembe is said to have been the highest religious authority.(8) 769 643 764 778 731

Carved wooden figures representing dead ancestors (*nkisi*) were kept in special huts and received offerings of beer, cassava, flour, hemp and tobacco.(9) Kazembe had several such figures, some named after dead chiefs, which were carried before the army in battle.(10) 778 532 769

(1) Valdez, II, p.242.
(2) Burton, p.128.
(3) Valdez, op.cit., p.243.
(4) Valdez, II, p.231.
(5) Burton, p.103.
(6) Valdez, op.cit., p.248.
(7) Valdez, II, p.257.
(8) ibid., p.243.
(9) Livingstone, I, p.353.
(10) ibid.

791 778 The *ng'anga* (magicians) of whose activity little is known, dwelt in a banana grove just south of the capital which no outsiders could enter on pain of death.(1)

782 789 787 [724] Human sacrifices were made at the capital.(2) Victims were prisoners of war and, failing them, the Kazembe's own subjects. Human blood, hearts and entrails are mentioned among the ingredients of which medicines were made.(3) Horns containing medicine were supposed to give protection from witchcraft. Before any hazardous enterprise - war, hunting, travel - was undertaken, an oracle was consulted(4) and, if prospects looked auspicious, a medicine was prepared.(5)

264 643 787 The Kazembe was said to receive warnings of hostile machinations in dreams. If he dreamt of someone more than once this was a sign that the man was plotting against him and must be put to death.(6) Crawford was informed that the Kazembe was ritually insulted during his meals, and he describes this in some detail.(7) "The king eats in a mysterious mode called *kapondo*... The 'old doctors' cursed him while he ate, his face veiled: 'Kazembe should die! He is no man! A beast! Kill the beast, oh! son of Temena (his mother's name)' ". The *mondo* was sounded to let people know that Kazembe was having his meal, and no one else was allowed to eat at the same time.

834 783 Ritual cleansing is prescribed after sexual intercourse. A man who kills a lion has to be washed in *nshipa* medicine by the headman before he can enter the village, and may not eat or speak till this has been done.

226 789 [784] [834] A wealth of ritual attached to fishing. Ritual authority was vested in the Shila "owners of the land".(8) The ceremony of *ukufungule sabi* (unlocking the fish) was performed annually towards the middle of the dry season on all the waters except the Luapula which "belongs to God". Bits of medicine were attached to the nets in order to ensure a good catch and prevent the nets from being torn. Charms were worn by fishermen or suspended at the bows to protect the canoe from being capsized by hippo or crocodiles. When the canoe was first launched the women sprinkled it with a little cassava flour to ensure plentiful catches. A women, particularly when carrying a child, was forbidden to step over a net. Sexual relations were tabooed when the fish were being poisoned. Lake Mweru was apparently never crossed south of Kilwa island, according to Livingstone.(9) At the "cursing" ceremony on Lake Mweru the dead men drowned in the lake were called by name and reprimanded.(10) Those who came safe ashore after their boats had foundered were greeted with a deliverance song and led in a thanksgiving procession.(11)

(1) Gamitto, I, p.358.
(2) Pereira puts the number of human victims at twenty a day (Livingstone, I, p.265). This is probably no more trustworthy than is his statement that Kazembe's army numbered 20,000 trained soldiers. R.J. Moore discusses human sacrifices as if at the time he wrote (1937) they were still common and an essential part of the salt-making ritual. The victim, according to him, is "nowadays usually a child".
(3) Burton, p.126.
(4) ibid., p.228.
(5) ibid., p.128.
(6) Livingstone, I, p.277.
(7) Crawford, 2, p.104.
(8) Livingstone, op.cit., p.252.
(9) op.cit., p.269.
(10) Crawford, op.cit., p.105.
(11) ibid., pp.105-6.

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'feed his people' and actually does so if they are in need, besides dispensing hospitality to strangers.

The head of the village acts as its ritual head. In the old days, he put up one village shrine to his own ancestors and one or more others to the dead chiefs of the land. This is still done in out-of-the-way parts of the country and in most places, I think, prayers are offered to these tutelary deities, whether shrines are built to them or no. The headman, like the chief, also influences the life of the community through his own person. He must 'warm the bush' (*ukukafye mpanga*) by an act of ritual intercourse with his wife before the huts of a new village are occupied. He blesses seeds for sowing, axes for tree-cutting, and first-fruits. His fire stands for the life of the community as a whole and must be ritually lighted when occasion demands. He presides over the special divination rites connected with village activities, such as the founding of a new community or the death of a member, and blesses new babies or individuals who are sick.

In the political hierarchy, the headman has his definite place. No Bemba may cultivate land except as a member of a village group, and the headman is responsible for organizing the supply of tribute and labour which must be paid to a chief by the community as a whole. He accompanies his villagers to court when they have cases to present and often speaks for them. He transmits the orders of a chief to his people and nowadays those of the Government. His prerogatives are few in number. As head of a kinship-group, he can command personal service from his younger relatives and should be able to exact one day's work from his people on the first day of tree-cutting and sowing. He is always given tribute of beer or meat. But probably, apart from these few economic privileges, the Bemba headman values most his position of authority, his small following, and the favour of his chief.

The sanctions for his authority nowadays are mainly his popularity, together with the strength of kinship feeling, and the belief of the Bemba that it is dangerous to allow an older relative to die injured. His supernatural powers were a source of strength in the old days, but to a very small extent now, and it must be admitted that the forces which keep a village together are not very strong. It is a constant fear to a headman that his people will melt away.

(*b*) *The Chief*. The functions of the different types of chief

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622 643 782 But here again ritual is one of the big integrating forces. The Citimukulu can initiate a series of sacrifices (*ulupepo lukalamba*), which start at his relic houses and spread to all the shrines throughout the land. The *bakabilo* are sent from Lubemba to bury any of the bigger territorial chiefs who die in their distant *ifyalo* and to install the new heir. The paramount prays for rain on the rare occasions when it is required, on behalf of the whole tribe. Thus for ritual purposes, in spite of the quarrels and jealousies between different lines of the royal family, the whole Bemba country can be said to act as a whole and to be conscious of its unity. If the paramount chief were to turn Christian before the political institutions of this tribe have been considerably adapted, tribal cohesion would, I think, be very much weakened, whether temporarily or permanently.

VII. Post-European Changes

177 642 643 The advent of British rule in Northern Rhodesia changed at once the position of the Bemba chief and his political machinery, and it continues to do so in an increasing variety of ways. Some of these changes are due to the actual introduction of new authorities into the area—whether Government officials, missionaries, or other Europeans—who have either replaced the old Bemba officials, divided the spheres of authority with them, or introduced entirely new conceptions of the functions of government itself. Others seem to be mainly the result of changed economic conditions, particularly the introduction of money, the institution of wage labour, and the provision of opportunities for money-making in industrial undertakings outside the territory. Such factors, over which the Administration has often little direct control, have inevitably affected the position of the Bemba chief. They have altered the people's conception of authority, destroyed the whole basis of labour on which the powers of the chief depended, and the old correlation between political authority, economic privilege, and military strength.

177 The total effects of white domination on the Bemba political organization have not yet proceeded to their full length, but it will be well to indicate some of the changes produced by the introduction of a new machinery of government, e.g. the alteration in the balance of the old tribal system, and the resultant weakening of the personal relationship between subject and chief upon which